

Amendments to the Claims

1 Claim 1 (previously presented): A method of enhancing a voice mail message for playback to a
2 listener, comprising steps of:
3 creating the voice mail message for the listener, by a caller using a telephone device, the
4 voice mail message comprising a plurality of message segments;
5 identifying, by the caller using the telephone device, at least two of the message segments
6 which are to have background sounds associated therewith;
7 selecting, for each of the identified message segments by the caller using the telephone
8 device, a sound to be associated therewith as the background sound, wherein the sounds selected
9 as the background sound for at least two of the message segments are different sounds; and
10 responsive to a request from the listener for playback of the voice mail message, playing
11 back at least two of the identified message segments for which a sound was selected to be
12 associated therewith as the background sound, while concurrently playing back the sound selected
13 as the background sound for each of the played-backed identified message segments, and wherein
14 the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of the played-back identified
15 message segments are different sounds, such that the background sound played back for the voice
16 mail message changes at least once during the playback.

Claims 2 - 8 (canceled)

1 Claim 9 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selecting step
2 further comprises entering, by the caller using the telephone device, a caller-specific personal

3 identification value, and wherein the entering of the caller-specific personal identification value
4 causes the sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically
5 selected, without intervention by the caller.

Claim 10 (canceled)

1 Claim 11 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message, wherein
3 the caller-specific profile indicates which sounds are to be selected as background sounds on
4 which days; and wherein the selecting step further comprises automatically processing the caller-
5 specific profile, responsive to the caller identifying the message segments, thereby causing the
6 sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected, based
7 on the day on which the voice mail message is created.

Claims 12 - 13 (canceled)

1 Claim 14 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selected
2 background sounds are selected randomly from a plurality of available background sounds.

1 Claim 15 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message; and
3 wherein the selecting step further comprises automatically processing the caller-specific profile,

4 responsive to the caller identifying the message segments, thereby causing the sounds to be
5 associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected according to the
6 profile, without intervention by the caller.

Claim 16 (canceled)

1 Claim 17 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selecting step
2 further comprises selecting each of the sounds, by the caller, from among a plurality of sounds
3 which are configured as non-updateable sounds selectable from the telephone device.

1 Claim 18 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selected sounds
2 are selected from among a plurality of sounds that are available to, and offered to the caller by, an
3 apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded.

Claim 19 (canceled)

1 Claim 20 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of transmitting the selected background sounds from the telephone device to an apparatus on
3 which the voice mail message is being recorded.

1 Claim 21 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 20, wherein the selected
2 background sounds are compressed prior to the transmitting.

1 Claim 22 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an identifier thereof from the telephone device to
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, for use by the apparatus to
4 obtain the played-back sounds.

1 Claim 23 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an address thereof from the telephone device to
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, wherein the transmitted address
4 for each of the selected sounds is usable for locating a file to use as the played-back sound.

1 Claims 24 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 23, wherein at least one of the
2 transmitted addresses is a Uniform Resource Locator.

Claims 25 - 27 (canceled)

1 Claim 28 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the selecting step
2 further comprises the step of selecting at least one of the sounds using one of: a dual-tone multi-
3 frequency (DTMF) capability of the telephone device; a touch-sensitive display screen of the
4 telephone device; a key sequence operated using keys of the telephone device; or a voice
5 recognition capability provided by a voice messaging system which records the voice mail
6 message.

Claims 29 - 89 (canceled)

1 Claim 90 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 20, wherein a telephone call
2 placed by the caller for creating the voice mail message is transparently extended, without
3 intervention of the caller, following the caller's completion of the voice mail message, and
4 wherein the transmitting occurs during the transparent extension, after which the transparently-
5 extended telephone call is automatically ended.

Claims 91 - 98 (canceled)

1 Claim 99 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the plurality of
2 message segments are identified by the caller using the telephone device.

1 Claim 100 (previously presented): A system for enhancing a voice mail message for playback to a
2 listener, comprising:
3 means for creating the voice mail message for the listener, by a caller using a telephone
4 device, the voice mail message comprising a plurality of message segments;
5 means for identifying, by the caller using the telephone device, at least two of the message
6 segments which are to have background sounds associated therewith;
7 means for selecting, for each of the identified message segments by the caller using the
8 telephone device, a sound to be associated therewith as the background sound, wherein the

9 sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of the message segments are different
10 sounds; and

11 means for playing back, responsive to a request from the listener for playback of the voice
12 mail message, at least two of the identified message segments for which a sound was selected to
13 be associated therewith as the background sound, while concurrently playing back the sound
14 selected as the background sound for each of the played-backed identified message segments, and
15 wherein the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of the played-back
16 identified message segments are different sounds, such that the background sound played back for
17 the voice mail message changes at least once during the playback.

1 Claim 101 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the plurality of
2 message segments are identified by the caller using the telephone device.

1 Claim 102 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the means for
2 selecting further comprises means for entering, by the caller using the telephone device, a caller-
3 specific personal identification value, and wherein the entering of the caller-specific personal
4 identification value causes the sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be
5 automatically selected, without intervention by the caller.

1 Claim 103 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means
2 for creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message,
3 wherein the caller-specific profile indicates which sounds are to be selected as background sounds

4 on which days; and wherein the means for selecting further comprises means for automatically
5 processing the caller-specific profile, responsive to the caller identifying the message segments,
6 thereby causing the sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be
7 automatically selected, based on the day on which the voice mail message is created.

1 Claim 104 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the selected
2 background sounds are selected randomly from a plurality of available background sounds.

1 Claim 105 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means
2 for creating, by the caller, a caller-specific profile prior to creating the voice mail message; and
3 wherein the means for selecting further comprises means for automatically processing the caller-
4 specific profile, responsive to the caller identifying the message segments, thereby causing the
5 sounds to be associated with the identified message segments to be automatically selected
6 according to the profile, without intervention by the caller.

1 Claim 106 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the means for
2 selecting further comprises means for selecting each of the sounds, by the caller, from among a
3 plurality of sounds which are configured as non-updateable sounds selectable from the telephone
4 device.

1 Claim 107 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, wherein the selected
2 sounds are selected from among a plurality of sounds that are available to, and offered to the

3 caller by, an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded.

1 Claim 108 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means
2 for transmitting the selected background sounds from the telephone device to an apparatus on
3 which the voice mail message is being recorded.

1 Claim 109 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means
2 for transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an identifier thereof from the telephone device to
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, for use by the apparatus to
4 obtain the played-back sounds.

1 Claim 110 (previously presented): The system according to Claim 100, further comprising means
2 for transmitting, for each of the selected sounds, an address thereof from the telephone device to
3 an apparatus on which the voice mail message is being recorded, wherein the transmitted address
4 for each of the selected sounds is usable for locating a file to use as the played-back sound.

1 Claim 111 (previously presented): A computer program product for enhancing a voice mail
2 message for playback to a listener, the computer program product embodied on at least one
3 computer-readable medium and comprising:
4 computer-readable program code for enabling a caller to create the voice mail message for
5 the listener, using a telephone device, the voice mail message comprising a plurality of message
6 segments;

7 computer-readable program code for enabling the caller to identify, using the telephone
8 device, at least two of the message segments which are to have background sounds associated
9 therewith;

10 computer-readable program code for enabling the caller to select, for each of the identified
11 message segments by the caller using the telephone device, a sound to be associated therewith as
12 the background sound, wherein the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of
13 the message segments are different sounds; and

14 computer-readable program code for playing back, responsive to a request from the listener
15 for playback of the voice mail message, at least two of the identified message segments for which
16 a sound was selected to be associated therewith as the background sound, while concurrently
17 playing back the sound selected as the background sound for each of the played-back identified
18 message segments, and wherein the sounds selected as the background sound for at least two of
19 the played-back identified message segments are different sounds, such that the background sound
20 played back for the voice mail message changes at least once during the playback.

1 Claim 112 (previously presented): The computer program product according to Claim 111,
2 wherein the plurality of message segments are identified by the caller using the telephone device.

1 Claim 113 (previously presented): The computer program product according to Claim 111,
2 wherein the computer-readable program code for enabling the caller to select further comprises
3 computer-readable program code for enabling the caller to select at least one of the sounds using
4 one of: a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) capability of the telephone device; a touch-sensitive

5 display screen of the telephone device; a key sequence operated using keys of the telephone
6 device; or a voice recognition capability provided by a voice messaging system which records the
7 voice mail message.

Claims 114 - 115 (canceled)

1 Claim 116 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 1, wherein the sound selected
2 as the background sound for at least two of the message segments are non-spoken sounds.